



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

October 11, 2019

Honorable Robert Drain  
United States Bankruptcy Judge  
United State Bankruptcy Court  
Southern District of New York  
300 Quarropas Street  
White Plains, New York 10601-4140

**Re: *In re Purdue Pharma L.P., et al.*  
Case No. 19-23649 (RDD)**

Dear Judge Drain:

As Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I write to inform you of my opposition to any order that might impede the Commonwealth, or any plaintiff, from holding accountable Purdue Pharma and the Sackler family for their roles in the Opioid Crisis.

The opioid epidemic is the worst public health crisis in Pennsylvania and opioid use disorder has devastated too many families in this Commonwealth and across the country. This infamous disease has bankrupted households, caused hard workers to lose their jobs, broken up families, and killed people we love. Every Pennsylvanian knows someone who is affected by opioid use disorder. It has permeated Pennsylvania – every corner, every community.

Pennsylvania has been particularly hard-hit by this epidemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Pennsylvania had the third-highest rate in the country of overdose deaths in 2017. In 2017, there were 5,456 drug-related overdoses and 3,126 infants born with drug withdrawal symptoms. From 2000 to 2017, the rate of opioid-related deaths increased more than 750% and the rate of infants born with neonatal abstinence syndrome increased more than 1000% in Pennsylvania. Parental substance use has far-reaching implications for children and is the most common factor reported for children removed from their home in Pennsylvania. In fact, in 2017 alone, 3,228 children were removed from their homes for this reason. The opioid epidemic has had debilitating effects on all areas of our society, including our economy. Penn State University found that opioid misuse reduced Pennsylvania state tax revenue by \$11.8 billion between the years 2000 and 2016.

In fact, the opioid crisis has been of such magnitude and severity in the harm that it has wrought on Pennsylvania's citizens that on January 10, 2018, I first issued a Disaster Declaration to permit Pennsylvania's executive agencies to take emergency action to stem the tide of devastation left in the wake of opioid use disorder. The crisis is of such a horrific scale that

between January 2018, when I issued the declaration, and March of this year, Pennsylvania's emergency medical service providers have administered 18,560 doses of naloxone, leaving behind 657 doses; our hospitals and birthing centers have reported 2,359 cases of neonatal abstinence syndrome in newborns; more than 19,300 residents have been admitted to emergency rooms because of a suspected opioid or heroin overdose; and Pennsylvania's "Get Help Now" addiction hotline has received more than 19,500 calls looking for information or to connect someone with a local treatment provider.

Through initiatives like the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, expanding treatment options, and the disaster declaration, we have begun to curb the number of deaths from overdoses and get more people on the road to recovery. In addition, more than 258 tons of drugs were collected and destroyed by law enforcement from the more than 800 drug take-back boxes across the Commonwealth. Sadly, despite these initiatives, and the vast sums of money my administration has devoted to this public health emergency, in 2018, approximately 4,491 drug-related overdose deaths were reported by Pennsylvania coroners and medical examiners, while untold additional citizens have died from other causes related to opioid addiction. In 2018, at least 12 people in Pennsylvania died of a drug-related overdose each day.

Indeed, we are still facing years of struggle before we undo the harm caused by the opioid epidemic. At the heart of this struggle lies Purdue Pharma, L.P., and the Sackler family, who, in 2007, agreed to cease the very practices that many feared would lead to these consequences. Shockingly, Purdue and the Sacklers failed to abide by their agreements, and instead preyed on Pennsylvanians from all backgrounds, including the elderly and patients already struggling with opioid use disorder. By creating a revolving door clientele that endlessly sought an increasing amount of opioids prescribed by doctors deliberately fed misinformation by Purdue Pharma, this deplorable company and its family owners were core contributors to this crisis that has gravely affected the lives of all Pennsylvanians.

I support Attorney General Shapiro's efforts to ensure that Purdue Pharma and the Sacklers are held accountable for their role in creating and worsening this public health crisis. The Defendants' callous and premeditated effort to misuse the nation's bankruptcy laws to avoid their responsibilities and deny justice to their victims should not be countenanced.

Sincerely,

  
TOM WOLF  
Governor